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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

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PER NSC WAIVER #2021-02

By MM NARA, Date 7/16/2021

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT

SUBJECT: A Possible Last Minute Appeal from Mandela

The ANC's Foreign Affairs spokesman Thabo Mbeki has been in touch with us and indicated that Mandela may make a last ditch appeal to you to wait four or five more weeks before you lift the sanctions. By that time Mandela hopes that all the political prisoners -- by ANC standards -- will have been released. While this proposal at first glance may seem to have some merit, in fact it is a very bad idea.

First, it is not at all certain that all of the ANC defined prisoners will be out in four weeks. The original ANC/SAG deadline was April 30 on this issue. And the haggling over who should be released is likely to drag on into September which would leave us dangling.

Second, we would be fundamentally abandoning our position that our action on sanctions would be governed by the letter of the law, i.e. we would not move the goalposts one way or another. Indeed we would be acceding to the approach suggested all along by Senator Kennedy and others that Mandela should determine when and under what circumstances we lift sanctions.

Finally, all of this is too far down the track for us to throw on the brakes now. Media speculation is rife that we will lift sanctions today. We are in the midst of the mini-political brouhaha on the subject, e.g. the press conference in Toronto. There would be no graceful way to change direction now. And we need to get the issue behind us. (Even Jimmy Carter says it is time to lift the sanctions.)

If Mandela does make this pitch to you, I would suggest that you gracefully decline but assure him that you will telephone de Klerk and urge him to be forthcoming and generous on any remaining prisoner cases.

Mandela is also likely to urge that non-CAAA sanctions, e.g. the Gramm Amendment on IMF loans and the Evans Amendment on use of Exim, be phased out gradually, not all at once. We can agree with that notion.

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cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

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